



the WATER TAP

WASHINGTON'S DRINKING WATER NEWSLETTER

Water Systems Urged To Review Radon Proposal

In November, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) released for public comment proposed drinking water standards intended to reduce public health risks for radon. Water system officials are urged to become familiar with the proposal, as it could have significant implications for many Washington water providers.

Information about the proposed radon rule can be found on EPA's website at <http://www.epa.gov/safewater>, or by calling the EPA Safe Drinking Water Hotline, 1-(800) 426-4791. Comments on the proposed rule are due to EPA by February 4, 2000. Department of Health comments about the rule will be posted on the department's website at <http://www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/dw> in early December.

Radon is a gas that has no color, odor or taste and comes from the natural radioactive breakdown of uranium

in the ground. Breathing radon in the indoor air of homes is the primary public health risk from radon and is a leading cause of lung cancer in the United States.

The health risks of radon in drinking water are considered far less than radon in indoor air. The EPA-proposed radon standards are an attempt to encourage states to adopt indoor air regulations and programs.

EPA's radon proposal includes a 300 pCi/L maximum contaminant level (MCL) for community water systems that use ground water, or an alternative 4,000 pCi/L MCL that water systems can comply with if they or their state implement an

EPA-approved program to reduce radon risks in household indoor-air as well as tap water.



Issue 40 • December 1999

First Annual Water Quality Monitoring Report Makes Its Debut

DOH mailed the first annual Water Quality Monitoring Report to most Group A Community and Non-transient Non-community (NTNC) water systems in November. The report outlines a system's water quality monitoring requirements for the coming year. It is hoped the report will help clarify complicated requirements making it easier for systems to stay in compliance.

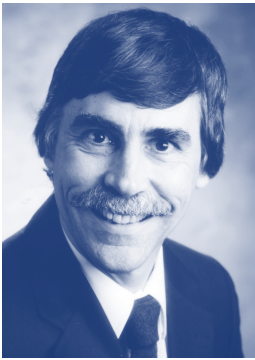
The report was not sent to Group A TNC systems nor was it sent to those Community and NTNC water systems that purchase all of their water from other supplies. A similar report may be developed for these systems in the future.

If you did not receive your system's report, contact your regional Drinking Water office.

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THE DIRECTOR'S COLUMN



This fall, we talked directly to more than 1,000 drinking water professionals during two major training and outreach efforts: our annual drinking water seminars, held in conjunction with the Washington Environmental Training Center, and a series of "Need to Know" workshops for small water system operators, offered in conjunction with Rural

Community Assistance Corporation and Evergreen Rural Water of Washington.

While both workshops carried a common theme of the challenge to meet increasingly complex water system regulations, the large attendance indicated to me a high interest by water providers in keeping informed and doing the right thing to protect the health of Washington residents.

In November, Washington voters approved Initiative 695, which will lower the level of state and local government funding from the motor vehicle excise tax beginning in January. Although all the ramifications are not yet clear, and there likely will be litigation over the initiative, we already have begun seeing its impact. This impact is likely to include reduced resources for state and local drinking water programs.

The Division of Drinking Water has never received funding from the motor vehicle excise tax, but our local government partners do. We have already received word from some local governments that they will no longer be able to support safe drinking water efforts in our state, due to I-695 cutbacks. The initiative will also freeze, at today's levels, the fee-based revenues the Division of Drinking Water receives. This will have an immediate impact on our program as well as create real limits on what we can do in the future.

With increasing regulatory complexity, a growing number of small public water systems in our state, and fewer resources to conduct regulatory activities, I envision an ever-decreasing role for state and local government in the oversight of water system operations.

Our current work with the Water Supply Advisory Committee to sort out the scope of our future program is timely and will help us shape our future. I believe that future will include continued commitment to outreach and training, such as those activities described above. In our current political environment, water system operators will need to assume more direct responsibility for understanding and meeting regulatory requirements. And consumers must participate as well by becoming actively engaged in ensuring the safety and reliability of the water they drink.

Grants Available for Youth Education

The Education Committee of the Pacific Northwest Section of the American Water Works Association has several grants available for programs targeted at Water Education for Youth. Eligible programs include water festivals, conservation education, watershed protection, and other drinking water issues.

Grants up to \$500 per program are available with funds to be awarded next spring. The deadline for application is February 1, 2000.

Further information, criteria, and applications are available by contacting Jacki Masters at Peninsula Light Company Water Department at (253) 857-1511 or e-mail jackim@penlite.org.



Water Supply Advisory Committee Update

The Water Supply Advisory Committee (WSAC) is continuing to work through its subcommittees in its role of advising the Division of Drinking Water on its activities.

The Subcommittee on the Scope and Funding of the state's drinking water program met in November and December, and expects to continue monthly meetings through March. These November and December meetings focused on Group B water system regulation and implementation of the federal Safe Drinking Water Act. The remaining topics to be discussed are small water systems, compliance, water rights/resources, and funding. The Subcommittee will be developing recommendations on these subjects for the Division by April 2000.

The Subcommittee on the Utilities and Transportation Commission met in September and October to discuss issues related to the UTC's jurisdiction and funding. The Subcommittee will reconvene in early 2000 to discuss some preliminary regulatory options and their costs. This Subcommittee also expects to complete its work by April 2000.

The full WSAC will have its next meeting on January 7 in the Olympia area.

For more information on the WSAC, please contact Dave Monthie at (360) 236-3091.

Millions of State Residents Receive Consumer Confidence Reports

More than 1,700 Group A community water systems in Washington provided consumer confidence reports to their customers, representing an impressive 75 percent of systems required to comply with this new federal regulation.

These reports reached 95 percent of the state's population served by Group A community systems, or about 4.6 million people.

"The CCR requirement presents the opportunity for utilities to explain to their customers that safe drinking water doesn't just happen, it takes a great deal of work behind the scenes to deliver safe water at the turn of a tap," said Gregg Grunenfelder, Drinking Water Division Director.



Those systems that did not provide their customers with a report have denied nearly a quarter of a million Washington citizens important information about their water.

Follow-up on noncompliance will come directly from EPA, as the state moves forward to adopt its own CCR rule in 2000.

For more information, contact Donna Freier, CCR Program Manager, (360) 236-3162 or email donna.freier@doh.wa.gov.

1,738 of 2,323 required systems issued the reports, 75% of those required.

Reports reached approximately 4.6 million state residents served by affected systems, 95% of total population served by affected systems.

Next report due date is July 1, 2000.

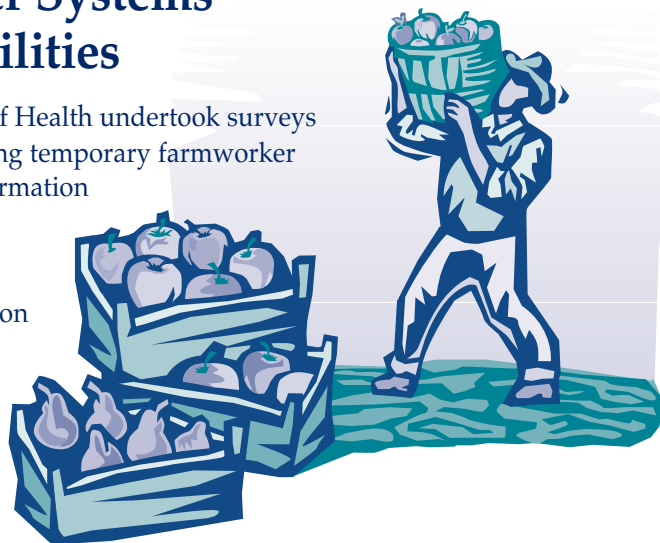
Department Inspects and Tests Water Systems Serving Temporary Farmworker Facilities

Last summer, at the direction of Governor Locke, the Department of Health undertook surveys and water sampling of all drinking water systems in the state serving temporary farmworker housing facilities. DOH initiated this effort to address a lack of information on systems serving temporary farmworkers and fears about the possibility of pesticide-contaminated drinking water.

To date, the testing showed few incidences of pesticide contamination in the water. However, the surveys and sampling uncovered many other problems in water systems serving temporary farmworker facilities, including water quality violations (most commonly of the nitrate standard) and system construction problems.

The fieldwork is complete, and laboratory testing of the water samples is in progress. Department staff surveyed and sampled systems serving 181 of the state's 224 farmworker-housing facilities. The other 43 either were closed in 1999 or denied the department access to complete the work.

As test results become available, the Drinking Water Division is following up with system owners, advising them of the status of their water systems and seeking agreements to fix problems. A full summary of the effort should be available in December, and will be posted to the Department of Health website at www.doh.wa.gov



Operator Certification:

Were you certified before January 1, 1998?

If so, you need to meet the professional growth requirement by December 31, 2000. If you were certified after January 1, 1998, you have until December 31, 2003 to meet the professional growth requirement.

The Water Works Operator Certification Program regulations require certified operators to demonstrate continued professional growth in the field in order to be eligible for certification renewal. Under the direction of the Department of Health, the Washington Environmental Training Center (WETRC) at Green River Community College provides course evaluation and Continuing Education Unit (CEU) assignment services to water works training course sponsors. It also maintains individual professional growth transcripts for each certified water works operator.

Operators certified prior to January 1, 1998 must accomplish one of the following by December 31, 2000 to be eligible for 2001-certification renewal:

***Option 1:** Accumulate a minimum of three CEUs or college credits for training that is directly relevant to the operation, maintenance or management of a water system, and has an influence on water quality, public health, or environmental protection.*

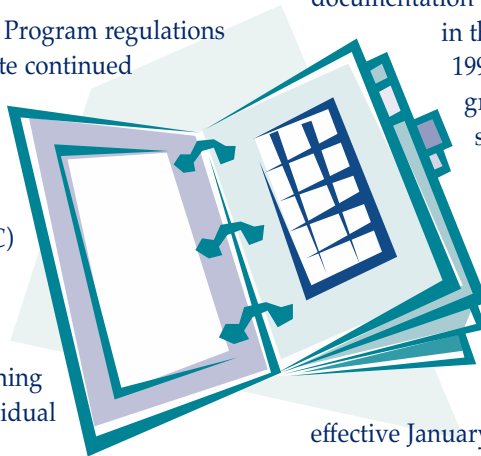
***Option 2:** Advance by examination in the Water Works Operator Certification Program to a level 2, 3 or 4, or achieve certification by examination in a different classification as follows:*

- | | |
|-----------------|------------------------------|
| a.- WDM to WTPO | c.- WDS to WDM or WTPO |
| b.- WTPO to WDM | d.- CCS to WDM, WTPO, or WDS |

Certified operators who have already met their professional growth requirement should have received a letter verifying their completion and a transcript from WETRC. This letter is the only official record accepted by the Department of Health as documentation of demonstrating continued professional growth in the field. If you were certified prior to January 1, 1998 and have not yet met your professional growth requirement, it is your responsibility to satisfy the requirement on or before December 31, 2000. If you fail to satisfy the requirement by the deadline date, you will not be eligible to renew your certificate.

All certified water works operators and course sponsors have been notified of changes to the course relevancy definition, as indicated in Option 1 above, that became effective January 1, 1999. Based on the new relevancy criteria instituted by the Department of Health, Division of Drinking Water, some training topics previously considered for CEU assignment or college credit will no longer be accepted. Training courses such as First Aid, CPR, Flagging, Defensive Driving, and others that do not meet the new relevancy criteria may not be used toward the professional growth requirement for renewal.

For further information please contact WETRC at 253-833-9111, ext. 3369 or toll-free 1-800-562-0858.



Water Systems Apply for DWSRF Assistance

The Department of Health (DOH) received 50 applications requesting \$31.1 million in assistance during the 1999 Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) loan cycle. DOH anticipates receiving its EPA grant award in the spring of 2000, and making formal loan offers soon thereafter.

The DWSRF provides low-interest loans to eligible water systems for capital improvements aimed at increasing public health protection and compliance with the Safe Drinking Water Act. Since the state's program was launched nearly \$65 million in loans has been committed to drinking water infrastructure improvements in Washington. This was the program's third loan cycle, which attracted more interest due to improved loan rates and terms. To date, the first two loan cycles have produced 47 executed contracts for \$24.7 million, with others still being negotiated. "We are proud to note that Washington is recognized as a national leader in getting loans out to water systems," Director Gregg Grunenfelder said. "Only five other states have executed 40 or more contracts and none have matched our success in funding privately owned systems."

Applications for the 2000 DWSRF loan cycle are due July 3, 2000. Details will be provided in updated guidelines and applications, available in the spring of 2000. Public workshop notices will be mailed in advance to water purveyors and interested parties, and will be held on the following dates:

- March 14 - Spokane
- March 15 - Everett
- March 21 - Wenatchee
- March 22 - Olympia

For more information call Chris Gagnon (360) 236-3095.

Our Readers Respond

Thank you for your responses to the Water Tap Communication and Training Survey earlier this year. About three percent of our readers returned the survey, which is about average for this kind of polling.

Highlights include:

- Most of you (69%) have access to E-mail and the Internet.
- Your top three preferences for getting information about drinking water issues are: mass-mailed information that you get without asking, the Water Tap, and workshops and conferences.
- The training methods you find most valuable are informal workshops/conferences and written instructional materials.
- The top three topics on which you would like additional training are: getting in and staying in compliance with drinking water regulations, operation and maintenance, and water quality monitoring.
- Your favorite regular feature in the Water Tap is the Education and Training Calendar. You would like to see more information on regulatory/compliance requirements, operation and maintenance, and case studies of solving problems.

We'll use this information to continue improving our communication and training programs. For a copy of the survey report, contact Ronni Woolrich, (360) 236-3092 or email ronni.woolrich@doh.wa.gov

Small Water System Guidance Document Nears Completion

The Division is wrapping up the development of a guide to help existing, non-expanding Group A Community water systems develop their Small Water System Management Program (SWSMP). The guide will be available in January 2000.

Existing Group A systems that are not intending to expand either their service area or their approved number of connections are required, per WAC 246-290-105, to develop a SWSMP. This guide has been designed to assist these systems in completing 18 critical technical, managerial and financial elements of owning and operating a public water system in compliance with the requirements of state and federal drinking water laws.

Call Shelly Smith at (360) 236-3151 to get on the SWSMP mailing list. The guide will be available in hard copy and posted to the Drinking Water website www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/dw early next year. If you have questions about the SWSMP guide call Peter Beaton at (360) 236-3150.



"Need To Know" Workshops Draw Hundreds of Participants

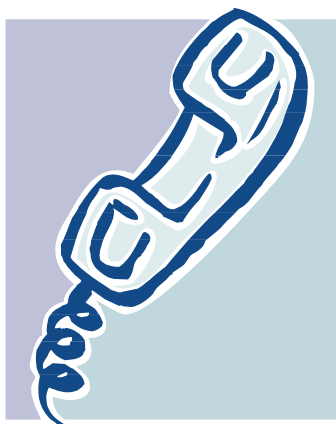
More than 950 people attended 17 free "Need To Know" small water system workshops offered this fall by the Division of Drinking Water. Most participants represented very small community water systems serving less than 100 connections and non-community systems.

The workshops covered an overview of Group A water system regulatory requirements, operation and maintenance techniques, and routine and emergency hypochlorination.

The workshops, held in various locations across the state, were co-sponsored by the Rural Community Assistance Corporation, Evergreen Rural Water of Washington, the Pacific Northwest Section of the American Water Works Association and the Washington Environmental Training Center.

Evaluations indicate participants found the training highly valuable, and included many suggestions for similar workshops in the future.

For more information about this series of workshops, contact Lisa Raysby at (360) 236-3147 or email Lisa.Raysby@doh.wa.gov.



To register call these contacts...

ERWOW

Evergreen Rural Water
of Washington
1-509-962-6326

WETRC

Washington Environmental
Training Center
1-253-288-3369

Training and Education Calendar Jan. - June 2000

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topics</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Contact</u>
Jan 4-6	Water Certification Exam Review	Everett	WETRC
Jan 5-7	Cross Connection Control Specialist Cert Review	Auburn	WETRC
Jan 12	Drinking Water 2000 Update (AWWA Subsection) - Sharron Kimball	Spokane	509-924-3655
Jan 19-21	Water Certification Exam Review	Auburn	WETRC
Jan 20	Cross Connection Control (AWWA Subsection)* - Tim Fulton	Tumwater	360-753-8362
Jan 25-27	Basic Electrical	Everett	WETRC
Jan 31	Confined Space Entry	Auburn	WETRC
Feb 2-3	Backflow Assembly Tester Troubleshooting and Repair	Auburn	WETRC
Feb 4	AC Pipe Work Practice Procedures	Auburn	WETRC
Feb 8-9	□Process Control and Instrumentation	Auburn	WETRC
Feb 8-10	Pump Operation and Maintenance	Everett	WETRC
Feb 14	Cross Connection Control Regulations Update	Auburn	WETRC
Feb 15-17	Chlorination System Operation & Maintenance	Everett	WETRC
Feb 22-24	6th Annual Management & Technical Conf	Yakima	ERWOW
Apr 4-5	Backflow Assembly Tester Troubleshooting and Repair	Auburn	WETRC
Apr 6	Confined Space Entry	Richland	WETRC
Apr 6-7	Process Control and Instrumentation	Everett	WETRC
Apr 11-13	Basic Water Works	Richland	WETRC
Apr 11-13	Chlorination System Operation & Maintenance	Yakima	WETRC
Apr 14	AC Pipe Work Practice Procedures	Auburn	WETRC
Apr 19-21	Pump Operation and Maintenance	Auburn	WETRC
Apr 21	Welding and Compressed Gas Safety (AWWA Subsection) - Tim Fulton	Ocean Shores	360-753-8362
Apr 20-21	Emergency Planning	Richland	WETRC
Apr 25-27	Basic Water Works	Everett	WETRC
Apr 26-28	Water Certification Exam Review	Auburn	WETRC
Apr 26-28	Basic Electrical	Tacoma	WETRC
May 2-4	Water Certification Exam Review	Yakima	WETRC
May 9-11	Cross Connection Control Specialist Cert Review	Everett	WETRC
May 23-25	Water Certification Exam Review	Everett	WETRC
May 24-26	Basic Electrical	Richland	WETRC
May 25-26	Emergency Planning	Auburn	WETRC
June 1-2	Process Control and Instrumentation	Richland	WETRC
June 2	AC Pipe Work Practice Procedures	Auburn	WETRC
June 20-22	Pump Operation and Maintenance	Richland	WETRC
June 27-28	Backflow Assembly Tester Troubleshooting and Repair	Auburn	WETRC

Additional Training Links:

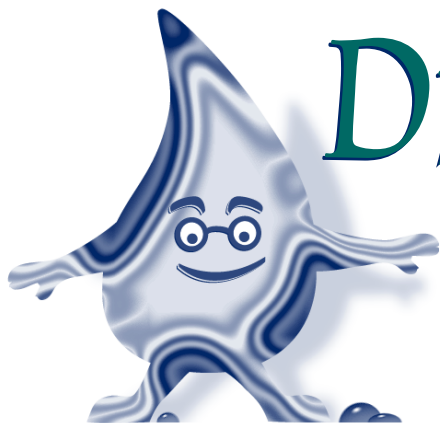
AWWA Website - <http://www.pnws-awwa.org/index.htm>

ERWOW Website - <http://www.ERWOWow.org>

WETRC Website - <http://www.ivygreen.ctc.edu/wetrc>

*Indicates training is less than \$25.00

**For the complete Training Calendar visit the Drinking Water Homepage
& click on Training - www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/dw**



Dr. Drip

Dear Dr. Drip:

A construction company began work in our area without letting us know in advance. Consequently, they dug up one of our water lines and left our customers without water until we could make repairs, disinfect and collect a bacteriological sample. Whose responsibility is it to pay for all the repairs?

Yours truly, Digging Deep

Dear D.D. (love your initials):

It depends on whether you are within a "one-call center area." If you are, you are mandated by law to subscribe to the service and you would have been called and requested to locate your water lines before the work began. If you are not located within a one-call center area, the contractor doing excavation should have contacted you directly. For more information you can get a copy of the complete regulation from your nearest one-call center listed by county in the column to the right. The following is a summary of utility and contractor responsibilities under the law.

Responsibilities of Water System

RCW 19.122 requires all water systems within a one-call center area (i.e., Call Before You Dig - CBYD) to subscribe to the service.

If the water system does not subscribe to the service and it's available, the excavator has no responsibility to search out the water system (at least not until damage occurs), and the water system will end up bearing the cost of repairs. However, it may be in the contractor's best interest to make contact to avoid disruption to its construction schedule by having to wait until repairs are made.

The water system needs to mark all distribution mains with the exception of service laterals or other appurtenances, provided these can be determined from visible facilities, such as buildings, manholes, and meter boxes. The marks also must be located within two feet of underground facilities.

Responsibilities of Contractor/Excavator

RCW 19.122 requires excavators to provide notice of intent through one number locator service (i.e., CBYD). If there is no CBYD in the area, they must notify the water system (and other underground services) in the area directly.

Notification cannot be less than two business days. If less than two business days, the water system can require compensation.

If the excavators find a water line, they must stop excavating and notify CBYD and the water system.

If the excavators damage a water line, they cannot bury it until the water system has the opportunity to inspect and make necessary repairs.

The excavators are not liable for any damages to the water system if these steps are followed.

One-Call Center Phone Numbers

For all these counties call 1-800-424-5555: Adams, Asotin, Benton, Clallam, Columbia, Ferry, Franklin, Garfield, Grant, Island, Jefferson, King, Kitsap, Lewis, Lincoln, Mason, Okanogan, Pierce, Skagit, Snohomish, Stevens, Thurston, Yakima (lower)

Chelan, Douglas: 509-663-6111

Clark: 360-696-4848

Cowlitz: 360-425-2506

Grays Harbor, Pacific: 360-532-3550

Kittitas, Yakima (upper): 1-800-553-4344

Klickitat, Skamania: 1-800-332-2344

Pend Orielle: 1-800-626-4950

Spokane: 509-456-8000

Wahkiakum: Call individual utilities.

Walla Walla: 1-800-332-2344

Whitman: 1-800-822-1974



IT'S THE LAW - CALL BEFORE YOU DIG!

Laboratory Agrees to Offer Resamples

Since announcement of the decertification of Cascade Analytical Service in Tacoma in the September issue of Water Tap, the Division of Drinking Water learned that public water systems submitting samples to the lab after the date of decertification had not been informed of the lab's status, and samples were still being analyzed by that lab. As a result, samples analyzed after the dates of decertification, (August 5, 1998 for some inorganic chemical analytes and May 30, 1999 for all inorganic testing), can not be counted by DOH toward compliance with applicable drinking water monitoring requirements. (NOTE: Cascade Analytical, Inc. (lab #138), located in Wenatchee, is still fully certified for inorganic chemical testing and testing of other analytes).

Cascade Analytical has agreed to offer free resamples until the end of the year. Cascade will coordinate resamples and contract with an appropriately certified lab to run the samples. The Division has mailed out letters to water systems believed to be affected, but if you think your system had an improper analysis done by this lab, and you have not received a letter from DOH, call Chris McCord at (360) 236-3135.



In This Issue

The following people have contributed to the production of this issue of the Water Tap.

John Aden, Peter Beaton, Cheryl Bergener, Donna Freier, Chris Gagnon, Gregg Grunenfelder, Janice Keller, Dave Monthie, Lisa Raysby, Ronni Woolrich, and Judy J. Sides, editor.

The Water Tap is published by the Department of Health, Division of Drinking Water, to provide information on subjects of interest to water system owners, water works operators and others interested in drinking water. Comments and questions are welcome. Past issues are available by writing to the editor, the Water Tap, Division of Drinking Water, P.O. Box 47822 Olympia, WA 98504-7822 or Email your request to DWINFO@doh.wa.gov. Past issues are also available on our website <http://www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/dw>

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After-Hours Hotline
for Drinking Water
Emergencies
toll free 1-877-481-4901
Call this number after-hours
when a problem:
• Threatens the health of your
customers or the integrity of
your system;
• Can't wait until the next
business day.



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